

It might be worth while to suggest to Norwegian Government, if they think there is any chance of reaching an agreement on "Mowinckel Plan," we should see no repetition no objection to their attempting this. They themselves will of course realise any hint to Germans that we had decided on evacuation would destroy any chance they may have of reaching an agreement. But evidently time for this is very short and our evacuation plan cannot be delayed."

10. The whole matter was then discussed between Sir Cecil, General Auchinleck, Colonel Pollock and myself upon the basis of this message. It was agreed that Sir Cecil Dormer on his return to Tromso should interview privately certain Ministers, and that he should suggest the revival of the "Mowinckel Plan," as proposed in the Foreign Office Message quoted above: that the King should be told the following morning, June 2nd, and the Cabinet officially informed later in the day. Subsequently, I was told by letter that the conversations had gone off well and that, after his talk with the Foreign Minister, the latter—who already had a meeting arranged in Stockholm for the 3rd—drafted a telegram to his Swedish colleague on the subject of the "Mowinckel Plan," which draft he allowed Sir Cecil to alter as he wished. Colonel Pollock on the same day gave the information to General Ruge. Vice-Admiral Cunningham was also informed and entrusted with making arrangements for the passage of the King, Government and others who might wish to evacuate should the negotiations break down. Sir Cecil Dormer asked that there should be a delay of a day or two in order to give time for the negotiations. After ascertaining that this would entail no harmful consequences to arrangements already made, I agreed to a delay of 24 hours. The first night of evacuation was, therefore, fixed as June 3rd-4th. Naturally, at first, there was a feeling of soreness and disillusionment among the Norwegians on learning of the evacuation but on the whole the decision was received as being inevitable under the circumstances and every help was given to facilitate the withdrawal.

11. I wrote to Admiral Diesen expressing the hope that he would send all his ships to the U.K. or assure me that they should not fall into German hands. The following most satisfactory answer was received:—

" 6th June, 1940. "

" My Lord:

My very best thanks for your kind letter. It has been a great pleasure for me to meet you, my Lord, and so many officers of the grand British Navy. As a Norwegian, I can only present my thanks for all it has done.

I am preparing all the ships that may be of any use for going to the Shetlands.

You may rest assured about the submarines as well as of the rest. What cannot be evacuated will be destroyed.

To you personally, my Lord, I send my very best wishes for the future of both our countries. God bless them!

In the hope of a au revoir,

Yours very sincerely,

(Sgd.) N. DIESEN."

The Naval Attaché, Rear-Admiral Boyes, also had the matter in hand.

12. The evacuation proceeded according to plan on the dates named. On 5 successive nights, troops to the numbers of 4,700, 4,900, 5,100, 5,200 and on the fifth the last and most difficult 4,600, without any untoward incident. The work was almost entirely carried out by destroyers working under the orders of Captain E. B. K. Stevens, D.S.C., Captain (D), 9th Destroyer Flotilla, in H.M.S. HAVELOCK. The presence of this energetic and capable officer ensured the programme being carried out punctually and efficiently. The destroyers were working almost continuously and, as always, rose to the occasion. Rear-Admiral Commanding 20th Cruiser Squadron was in direct charge of the transports at rendezvous and responsible for the embarkation. Up to the end, air protection was afforded by the R.A.F. and F.A.A. working in co-operation and to a programme. Owing, however, to the weather conditions that prevailed through the 5 days, low clouds and rain, the enemy air action was weak and spasmodic. Dive bombing attacks were, however, delivered upon STORK and VETERAN in Ofot Fiord during the afternoon of the 7th but the enemy did not appear to have noticed anything unusual, for no special effort was made that evening. The last men to be embarked in the Transports were the Ground Staff of the Bardufoss aerodrome. The Gladiators had been embarked in GLORIOUS but it was feared that the 8 Hurricanes that remained efficient would have to be abandoned and destroyed. The courageous action of the pilots in volunteering to fly their machines on to the flying deck of GLORIOUS and of Group-Captain Moore in allowing it to be done resulted in all 8 being safely got away—an achievement which deserved a better fate than that which befell the gallant men who had carried it out successfully.

13. The actual sailing of the various Convoys carrying the whole expedition to the U.K. was as follows:—

Group 1.

MONARCH OF BERMUDA. BATTERY. SOBIESKI. FRANCONIA. LANCASTRIA. GEORGIC.

} With VINDICTIVE.

Group 2.

ORONSAY. ORMONDE. ARANDORA STAR. ROYAL ULSTERMAN. ULSTER PRINCE. ULSTER MONARCH. DUCHESS OF YORK.

} With COVENTRY (C.S.20). SOUTHAMPTON (R.A.18). HAVELOCK (D.9). FAME. FIREDRAKE. BEAGLE. DELIGHT.

VANDYCK should have been with this Group but failed to make the rendezvous.

Storeships (Slow Convoy left Harstad 2200/7 June).

BLACKHEATH. OLIGARCH. HARMATTAN. CROMARTY FIRTH. THESEUS. ACRITY. COXWOLD. CONCH.

} With STORK, ARROW, and 10 Trawlers.